

# ACTION

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**BIG NEWS !  
8 EXTRA PAGES !**  
Exciting story  
and feature.



# SABOTAGE!

# MEN OF ACTION...

who displayed cool courage in the face of death

On the night of January 31st, 1953, the East coast of England was lashed by the worst gales for years. Leading Fireman Frederick Sadd was on duty that night and in the early hours he received a report of flooding in Great Yarmouth. A scene of disaster greeted Sadd and his men when they reached the spot. Five feet of water lapped round the houses and fifty people were trapped. Sadd found a rowing boat, but the



oars had been lost and he was forced to push the boat from house to house to rescue the families. By two o'clock in the morning the gale was at its height, and with the water still rising, Sadd ordered his men back and went on alone. All that night he continued his life-saving work until everyone had been taken to safety. Two months later, Leading Fireman Sadd was awarded the George Medal for his outstanding gallantry.

# SABOTAGE!

A BOOKLET OF MATCHES... A CLUE THAT  
UNCOVERED A FANTASTIC PLOT TO  
CRIPPLE THE AMERICAN 6TH FLEET!



IT HAD STARTED  
AS A ROUTINE  
ASSIGNMENT FOR  
CRIME REPORTER,  
JOHNNY HARLAND...

WORKMEN HAVE UNCOVERED  
THE BODY OF A MAN IN A CELLAR.  
THERE'S A BULLET HOLE IN THE  
SKULL, AND IT'S OBVIOUSLY  
A CASE OF MURDER...

DETECTIVES LOOK ON ALL REPORTERS AS A NUISANCE...

SORRY, HARLAND,  
YOU CAN'T GO DOWN  
THERE YET. THE BODY  
HASN'T BEEN REMOVED  
- OUR MEN ARE  
PHOTOGRAPHING  
IT.

WELL,  
INSPECTOR,  
CAN YOU TELL  
ME THIS - WAS  
IT A RECENT  
MURDER?

NO. THE  
FIRST MEDICAL  
REPORTS  
SUGGEST THAT  
DEATH  
OCCURRED  
ABOUT THREE  
YEARS AGO.

WHEN THE BODY HAD BEEN TAKEN AWAY, JOHNNY AND HIS CAMERAMAN PAL, TED MACKLIN, WERE ALLOWED INTO THE CELLAR.



I KNOW THE 'FIRENZE' WELL, I WAS IN VENICE LAST YEAR FOR THE SPEEDBOAT RACING. WASN'T THERE SOMETHING ABOUT THE BLOKE WHO RUNS THE PLACE...?



THE NEWSPAPER'S FILES GAVE HIM THE INFORMATION...





... THIS CHAP WAS MURDERED AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME AS THERE WAS SABOTAGE AT AN ARMS FACTORY JUST NEAR WHERE HIS BODY WAS FOUND - ALSO THREE YEARS AGO!



SO YOU THINK THERE'S A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE MURDER AND THIS MAN, RYCOFF, IN VENICE?



THERE MUST BE! LET US GO TO VENICE, BOSS. WE'LL BRING YOU BACK A STORY - I FEEL IT IN MY BONES!

BEFORE HE AND TED FLEW TO VENICE, JOHNNY GOT A FRIEND OF HIS AT SCOTLAND YARD TO LET HIM HAVE A COPY OF THE DEAD MAN'S PASSPORT PHOTOGRAPH...

DON'T TELL ANYONE YOU GOT IT FROM ME, FOR PETE'S SAKE!



MUM'S THE WORD - AND THANKS, BERT!

VENICE WAS AN HOUR'S FLYING TIME FROM LONDON...

LOOK AT ALL THOSE WARSHIPS. THEY MUST BE THE AMERICAN SHIPS FROM THE SIXTH FLEET, GETTING READY FOR THE BIG NATO NAVAL REVIEW...



ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS JOHNNY DID, WAS TO GO TO THE RISTORANTE FIRENZE AND SHOW THE PICTURE OF THE MURDERED MAN TO IVOR RYCOFF, THE AMERICAN OWNER.

NO, I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS GUY BEFORE, NOR ANY-ONE LIKE HIM.

HE'S LYING! I'M SURE OF IT!



RYCOFF. SHOT AN UNEASY, SUSPICIOUS GLANCE AT JOHNNY...

WHY COME  
TO ME, ANYWAY? WHO  
ARE YOU?

A NEWSPAPER REPORTER,  
MISTER RYCOFF. WE THINK THERE'S  
A STORY BEHIND THIS MAN, AND WE  
THOUGHT YOU MIGHT KNOW SOME-  
THING ABOUT HIM.

BUT THEY GOT NO INFORMATION FROM THE AMERICAN.

orante FIRENZE

TED, RYCOFF WAS  
LYING - AND HE DIDN'T  
LIKE MY ASKING THOSE  
QUESTIONS ABOUT THE MAN  
ON THIS PHOTO!

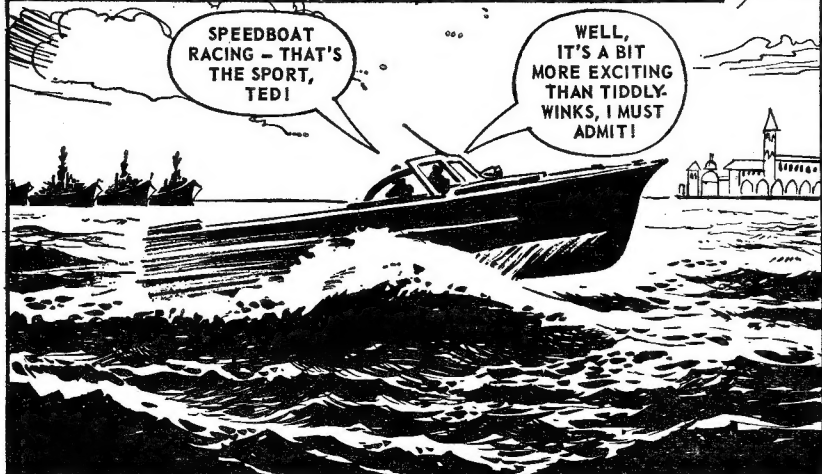
I THINK  
YOU'RE RIGHT.  
A SHIFTY SORT OF  
CHARACTER...



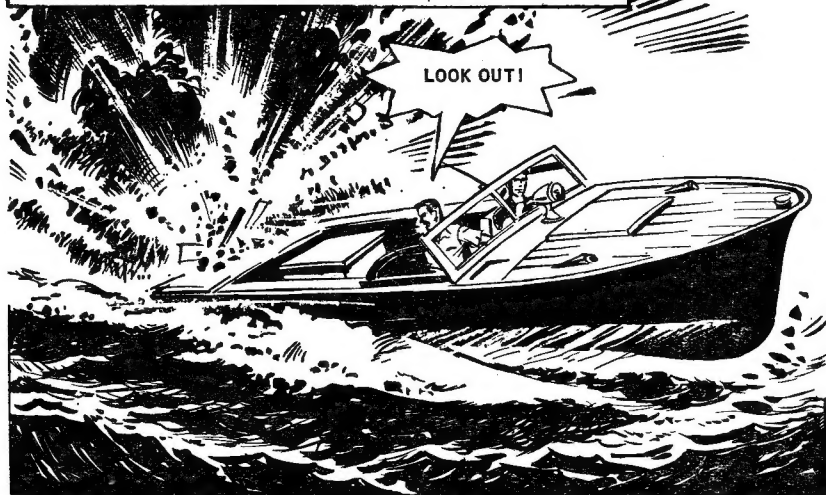
THEY BEGAN TO MAKE ENQUIRIES AT ALL THE RESTAURANTS, CAFÉS AND BARS ABOUT THE MAN IN THE PHOTOGRAPH.



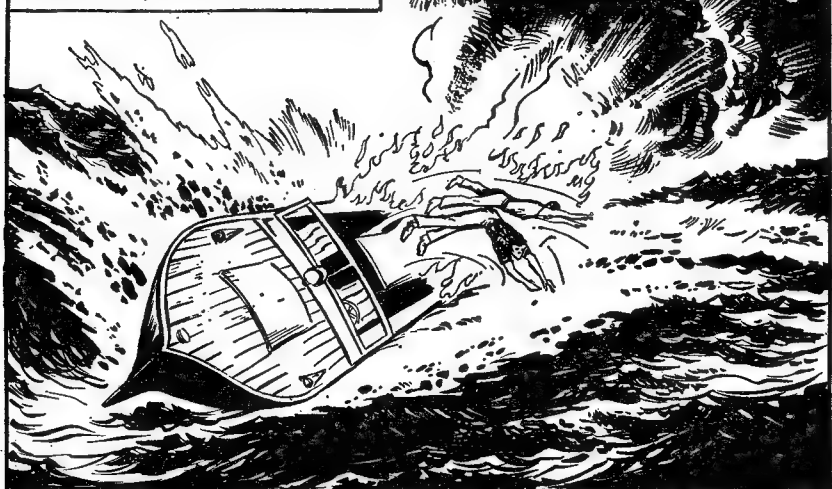
THE TWO NEWSPAPERMEN ONLY TOOK TIME OFF FROM THEIR INVESTIGATIONS TO HAVE A DAILY SPIN IN A HIRED SPEEDBOAT IN THE LAGOON...



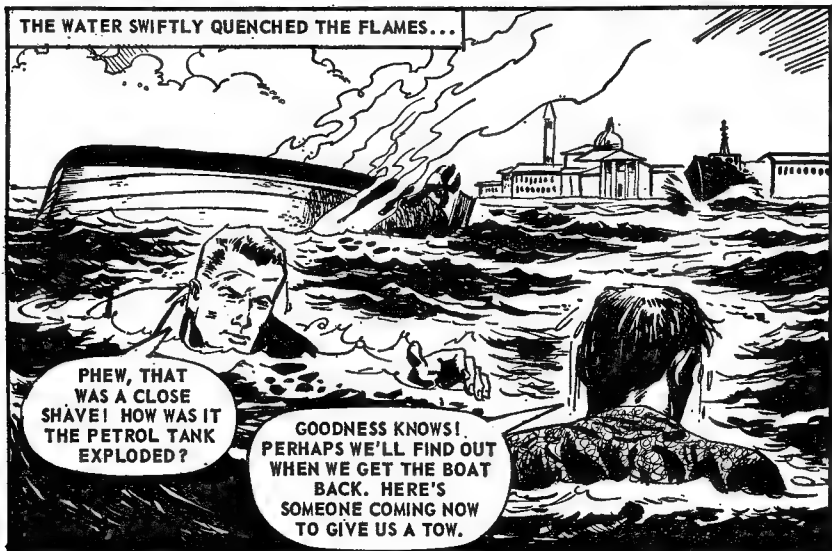
ON THE THIRD MORNING, THEY WERE GOING FLAT OUT WHEN THERE WAS A SUDDEN EXPLOSION AND A GREAT SPOUT OF FLAME...



WRENCHING THE WHEEL IN A TIGHT TURN, JOHNNY CAPSIZED THE BOAT. AS IT TURNED OVER, THEY DIVED CLEAR...



THE WATER SWIFTLY QUENCHED THE FLAMES...



PHEW, THAT WAS A CLOSE SHAVE! HOW WAS IT THE PETROL TANK EXPLODED?

GOODNESS KNOWS! PERHAPS WE'LL FIND OUT WHEN WE GET THE BOAT BACK. HERE'S SOMEONE COMING NOW TO GIVE US A TOW.

IT WAS THE OWNERS OF THE BOAT -  
TWO GENIAL ITALIANS - WHO TOWED  
IT BACK TO THE SLIPWAY...

IS-A  
NOTHING  
SERIOUS - AND  
WE HAVE THE  
INSURANCE,  
MARCO.

SI, SI!  
BUT WHAT  
CAUSE THE  
EXPLOSION,  
LUGI?

THEN LUGI DISCOVERED PART OF A  
FUSE...

WHEN THE  
ENGINE STARTS,  
THE FUSE BEGINS TO  
BURN. IT REACH  
THE EXPLOSIVE,  
AND - BANG!

WHO  
COULD HAVE  
DONE IT?

MAYBE IT WAS THE  
MAN WE SEE LAST  
NIGHT, LUGI. A BIG  
MAN, HAVE-A SCAR BY  
SIDE OF HIS MOUTH.  
HE HANG AROUND...

JOHNNY WAS TO REMEMBER THAT, THE NEXT DAY. HE WAS TAKING HIS EARLY MORNING SWIM, WHEN HE SAW ANOTHER SWIMMER IN DIFFICULTIES...



A POWERFUL SWIMMER, JOHNNY SOON REACHED THE MAN...



IN APPARENT PANIC, THE MAN THREW HIS ARM AROUND JOHNNY'S NECK AND BEGAN TO DRAG HIM UNDER...



JOHNNY TRIED TO TWIST FREE, BUT THE MAN CAUGHT HIM BY THE THROAT AND BEGAN TO CHOKE HIM...

HECK!  
HE'S DOING IT  
ON PURPOSE!  
THAT CRY FOR  
HELP WAS A  
TRICK!



IN DESPERATION, JOHNNY DROVE HIS FOOT INTO THE MAN'S MIDRIF... ..



AS THE MAN'S GRASP RELAXED, JOHNNY CHOPPED HIM ACROSS THE ADAM'S APPLE...





NEXT MOMENT, JOHNNY SHOT TO THE SURFACE. AS HE GULPED IN GREAT LUNGFULS OF AIR, HIS ADVERSARY BROKE SURFACE...

A SCAR BY THE SIDE OF HIS MOUTH! IT'S THE MAN MARCO SAW - THE MAN WHO MUST HAVE PLANTED THAT EXPLOSIVE IN IT...



YOU  
MURDERING  
SWINE!



JUST THEN, THE SPEEDBOAT CAME  
ROARING TOWARDS THEM...

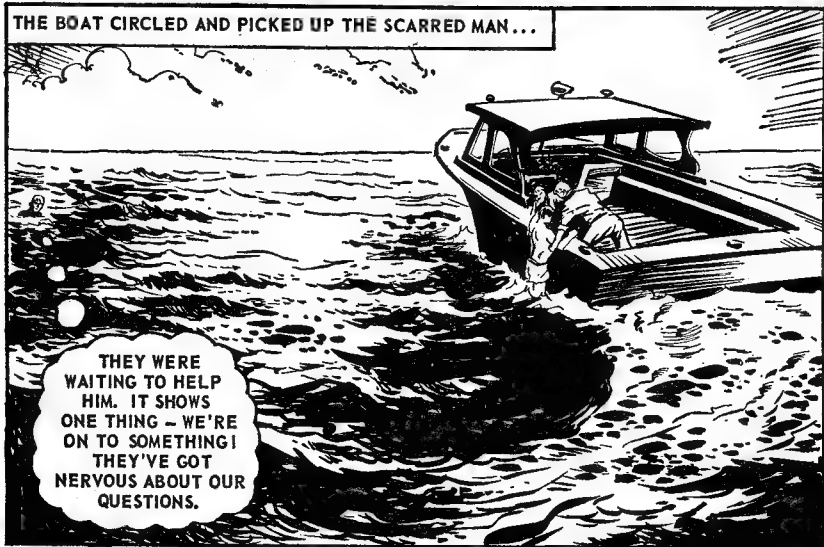
HELL'S BELLS!  
THEY'RE TRYING  
TO HIT ME!



JOHNNY DIVED WITH INCHES TO SPARE...



THE BOAT CIRCLED AND PICKED UP THE SCARRED MAN...



THEY WERE  
WAITING TO HELP  
HIM. IT SHOWS  
ONE THING - WE'RE  
ON TO SOMETHING!  
THEY'VE GOT  
NERVOUS ABOUT OUR  
QUESTIONS.

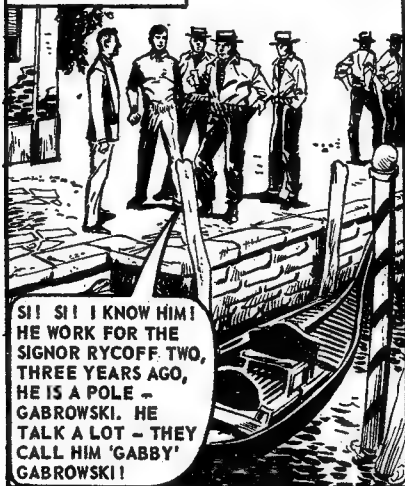
ONCE JOHNNY'S ATTACKER WAS SAFELY ABOARD, THE SPEEDBOAT FOAMED OFF AT TOP SPEED...



LATER...



THAT EVENING, THEY HAD THEIR FIRST SLICE OF LUCK...



SH! SH! I KNOW HIM!  
HE WORK FOR THE  
SIGNOR RYCOFF TWO,  
THREE YEARS AGO,  
HE IS A POLE -  
GABROWSKI. HE  
TALK A LOT - THEY  
CALL HIM 'GABBY'  
GABROWSKI!

THERE'S ONLY ONE  
THING FOR IT - WE'LL CALL  
RYCOFF A LIAR TO HIS  
FACE. FORCE HIM TO BRING  
THINGS TO A HEAD!

SOUNDS RISKY,  
BUT I'M GAME,  
JOHNNY!

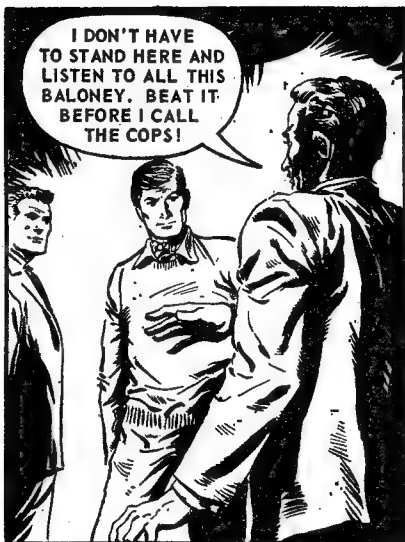
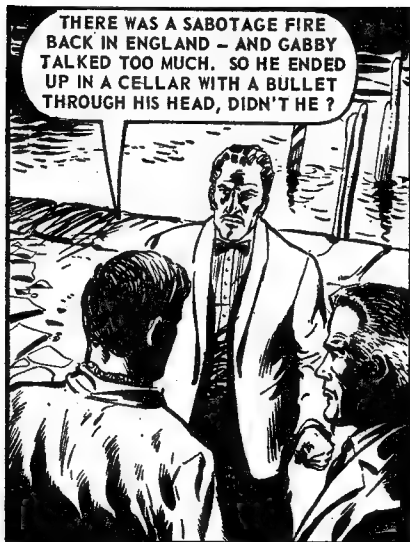


THAT NIGHT, THEY CONFRONTED  
RYCOFF OUTSIDE HIS RESTAURANT...



LOOK, RYCOFF, WE  
KNOW YOU WERE LYING!  
YOU RECOGNISED THE MAN  
ON THE PHOTO WE SHOWED YOU.  
IN FACT, HE WORKED FOR YOU.  
WE THINK YOU HAD HIM  
BUMPED OFF!

YOU'RE  
CRAZY!



JOHNNY AND TED HAD LIT THE FUSE. NOW THEY MUST WAIT FOR THE EXPLOSION...



TED, I  
HAVE A FEELING  
WE'RE BEING  
FOLLOWED!

THEY TURNED  
CASUALLY TO  
LOOK INTO A  
SHOP WINDOW.

YES, THERE'S  
A BLOKE TAILING  
US ALL RIGHT. ONE  
OF RYCOFF'S STRONG  
ARM BOYS, NO  
DOUBT!

THEN WE  
HAD BETTER  
KEEP TO THE BRIGHT  
LIGHTS, WHERE HE  
WON'T DARE  
SHOOT.



THEIR "TAIL" WAS STILL WITH THEM WHEN THEY REACHED THEIR HOTEL. FROM THEIR BALCONY, THEY COULD SEE HIM WAITING ACROSS THE STREET...

WELL, RYCOFF BIT, ALL RIGHT. WHAT DO WE DO NOW?

HE WANTS TO GET US ON OUR OWN IN A DARK SPOT - RIGHT? OKAY, I'LL LEAD HIM INTO THE DARK ALLEYWAYS BY THE SAN LORENZO CANAL. YOU CAN BE WAITING THERE UNDER THE BRIDGE IN A MOTOR-BOAT...

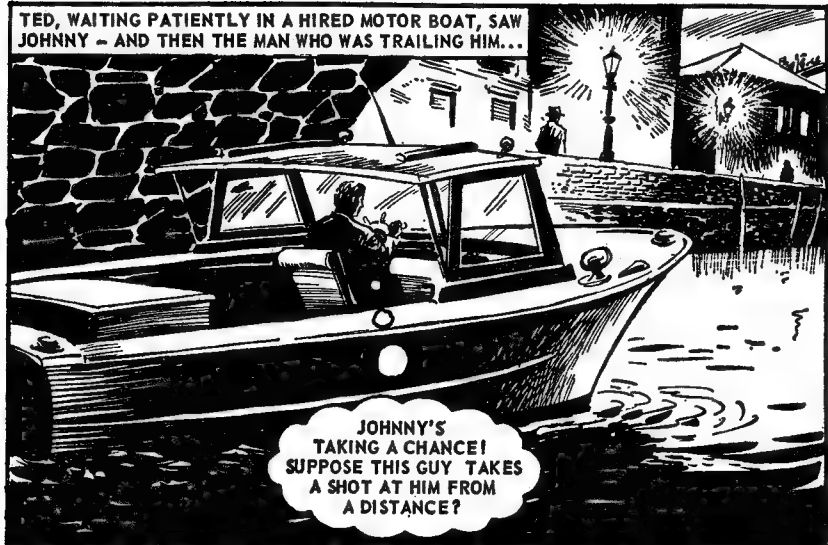
TED LEFT BY A BACK DOOR OF THE HOTEL AND AN HOUR LATER, JOHNNY SET OUT. IMMEDIATELY, HE SENSED HE WAS BEING FOLLOWED...



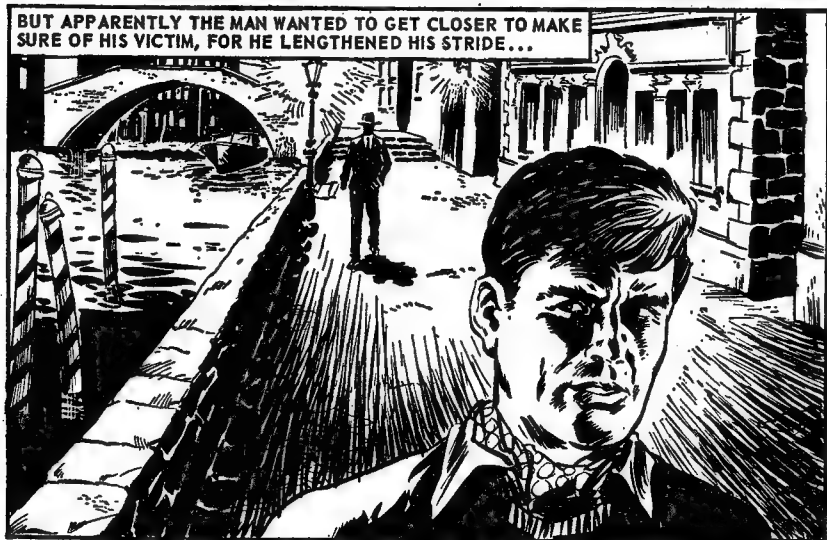
HE HEADED ALONG THE RIVA SAN LORENZO, PASSING THE BRIDGE WHERE HE KNEW TED WOULD BE WAITING...



TED, WAITING PATIENTLY IN A HIRED MOTOR BOAT, SAW  
JOHNNY - AND THEN THE MAN WHO WAS TRAILING HIM...



BUT APPARENTLY THE MAN WANTED TO GET CLOSER TO MAKE  
SURE OF HIS VICTIM, FOR HE LENGTHENED HIS STRIDE...





SEEMINGLY CASUALLY, JOHNNY TURNED A CORNER - THEN WAITED IN THE INKY SHADOWS...



HIS FOLLOWER QUICKENED HIS PACE – AND DREW HIS PISTOL...



THEN JOHNNY HIT HIM...



THE GUNMAN STAGGERED - AND JOHNNY  
CHOPPED HIS UPPER ARM WITH  
PARALYSING FORCE...

DROP IT!



THEN...



UGH!

GOOD WORK,  
JOHNNY!

GET HIM  
INTO THE BOAT  
QUICK! WE  
DAREN'T HANG  
ABOUT!





TED SWUNG THE BOAT AROUND AND HEADED FOR THE OPEN WATER AT THE END OF THE CANAL. THE GUNMAN WAS BEGINNING TO COME TO, SO JOHNNY BOUND AND GAGGED HIM...



BY THE TIME THEY CROSSED UNDER THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS AND EMERGED INTO THE OPEN WATER BY THE RIVA SCIAVONI, THEIR PRISONER WAS HIDDEN UNDER A TARPAULIN.



IN THE QUIET, DESERTED WATERS FAR OFF IN THE LAGOON ON THE LANDWARD SIDE OF THE LIDO, THEY TOOK THE GAG OUT OF THE MAN'S MOUTH AND BEGAN TO QUESTION HIM.



THE MAN FELL SILENT AND JOHNNY AND TED LEANED FORWARD THREATENINGLY...

WHAT IS  
THIS SOMETHING  
'BIG'?

COME ON!  
OR SHALL WE  
START ALL OVER  
AGAIN?

I - I DO NOT  
KNOW! BUT THERE  
IS TO BE MEETING  
AS SOON AS IT GET  
DARK TOMORROW NIGHT,  
IN THE VILLA MANZINI.  
THEN RYCOFF TELL WHAT  
THEY ARE TO DO...

NOW THAT THEY HAD FOUND OUT WHAT THEY WANTED TO KNOW, THEY UNTIED THEIR PRISONER AND DUMPED HIM ON ONE OF THE ISLETS - LITTLE MORE THAN A MUDBANK - AND HEADED BACK FOR VENICE...

IT'LL TAKE  
HIM A GOOD TWENTY-FOUR  
HOURS BEFORE HE'LL BE  
ABLE TO ATTRACT ANYONE'S  
ATTENTION! THE VENETIAN  
FISHERMEN DON'T OFTEN  
COME THIS WAY.

THE FOLLOWING EVENING, THEY STROLLED QUIETLY PAST THE VILLA MANZINI AND, AS SOON AS IT WAS DARK, CLIMBED SILENTLY INTO THE GARDEN...



THEY WERE IN THE DEEP SHADOWS IN THE GARDEN WHEN THEY SAW A MAN LET HIMSELF INTO THE GARDEN THROUGH A DOOR IN THE SIDE WALL...



RYCOFF ENTERED THE VILLA, AND WAS FOLLOWED AT SHORT INTERVALS BY EIGHT OTHER MEN. A LIGHT WENT ON IN A ROOM ON THE FIRST FLOOR ...



THE TWO NEWSPAPERMEN CLIMBED UP TO A LEDGE AND WORMED THEIR WAY ALONG IT TOWARDS THE WINDOW ...



SOON THEY WERE ON THE BALCONY, AND JOHNNY VERY GENTLY EASED THE BLIND TO ONE SIDE ...



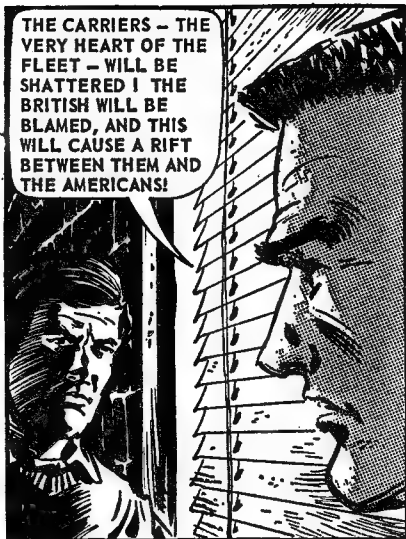
IN THE ROOM, RYCOFF WAS ADDRESSING HIS MEN ...

THIS IS THE BIGGEST COUP WE HAVE EVER ATTEMPTED. TONIGHT, WE ARE GOING TO CRIPPLE - I REPEAT, CRIPPLE - THE AMERICAN SIXTH FLEET !

THE CREW OF THE BRITISH GUIDED-MISSILE FRIGATE, H.M.S. 'CAMPION', HAVE BEEN INVITED BY ME TO A BANQUET IN THE BASEMENT OF THE FIRENZE. THEY WILL BE RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS ...

WE DRESS IN THEIR UNIFORMS AND GO ABOARD THE FRIGATE. THE THREE-MEN LEFT ON BOARD SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM ! THEN WE STEER THE SHIP TOWARDS TWO AMERICAN CARRIERS - AND ABANDON IT !





BUT THEIR STORY PROVED TOO MUCH FOR THE VENICE POLICE TO SWALLOW. THEY WERE QUESTIONED AND REQUESTED ...



THE POLICEMEN EXCHANGED MEANING LOOKS ...



THE POLICE OFFICER BEHIND THE DESK SMILED SOOTHINGLY, AND TURNED ...



THE POLICEMAN RETURNED WITH SOMEONE THE TWO ENGLISHMEN RECOGNISED  
AT ONCE ...



JOHNNY AND TED SAW THAT THE GAME WAS UP.. YET SOMEHOW THEY HAD TO REMAIN FREE, FOR THE SAFETY OF THE SIXTH FLEET DEPENDS ON IT ...



TED BUNDLED A POLICEMAN ASIDE -- AND JOHNNY SENT RYCOFF'S MAN FLYING WITH A TREMENDOUS UPPER-CUT ...



THEY HAD NO HOPE OF GETTING  
OUT OF THE DOOR. THE ONLY  
ALTERNATIVE WAS THE WINDOW ...



THE CANAL FLOWED BENEATH THE WALLS OF THE POLICE HEADQUARTERS - AND THEY PLUNGED STRAIGHT INTO IT...



THEY CLIMBED OUT ON THE FAR SIDE - BUT BY NOW THE WHOLE AREA WAS ALIVE WITH POLICE.



COME ON,  
TED I GET  
UNDER THIS  
TARPAULIN ...

OKAY, BUT  
THE HECK OF  
IT IS WE'RE LOSING  
VALUABLE TIME IN  
WARNING THE  
FRIGATE ...

AT THAT MOMENT, THE CREW OF H.M.S. CAMPION WERE HAVING A HIGH OLD TIME IN THE RISTORANTE FIRENZE ...



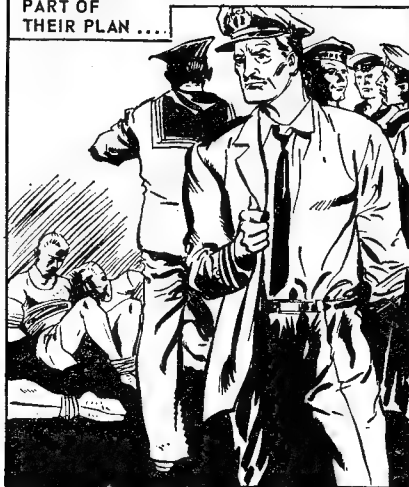
HEY I  
THIS IS A  
SMASHING  
DO I

A REAL  
NOSH-UP I

THEY DID NOT SEE THE COLOURLESS, ODOURLESS GAS THAT WAS BEING PUMPED INTO THE ROOM, AND NEVER REALISED ANYTHING WAS WRONG, UNTIL THEY BEGAN TO FALL UNCONSCIOUS...!



WHEN THE GAS HAD CLEARED, RYCOFF AND HIS MEN CARRIED OUT THE NEXT PART OF THEIR PLAN ....



THE SENTRY AT THE CAMPION'S GANG-PLANK WAS COMPLETELY TAKEN IN ...



THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN WAS IN THE OPERATIONS ROOM WHEN THE RAIDERS BURST IN. HE NEVER HAD A CHANCE ...



WITHIN MINUTES, RYCOFF AND HIS MEN HAD TAKEN OVER THE FRIGATE...



THE NUCLEAR DEVICE WAS BROUGHT ABOARD AND WIRED UP BY RYCOFF'S TECHNICAL EXPERTS...





MEANWHILE, JOHNNY AND TED HAD BEEN WAITING FOR HOUR AFTER HOUR FOR A CHANCE TO LEAVE THE BARGE, BUT THERE WERE ALWAYS POLICEMEN PATROLLING NEARBY...

HELL'S BELLS!  
BY THE TIME  
WE GET OUT OF  
HERE, THE FRIGATE  
MAY HAVE  
SAILED.

THEY GOT AWAY AT LAST, REACHING THE QUAYSIDE JUST AS DAWN WAS BREAKING...

OH HECK! THERE  
GOES THE CAMPION!  
TED, WE'VE GOT  
TO STOP HER  
SOMEHOW!

THAT  
LAUNCH  
THERE - IT'S  
RYCOFF'S, ISN'T  
IT? WE'LL  
USE THAT!

THEY WERE STEPPING ABOARD,  
WHEN ONE OF RYCOFF'S MEN  
RUSHED UP...

STOP!

TED TURNED ON THE CROOK SAVAGELY...

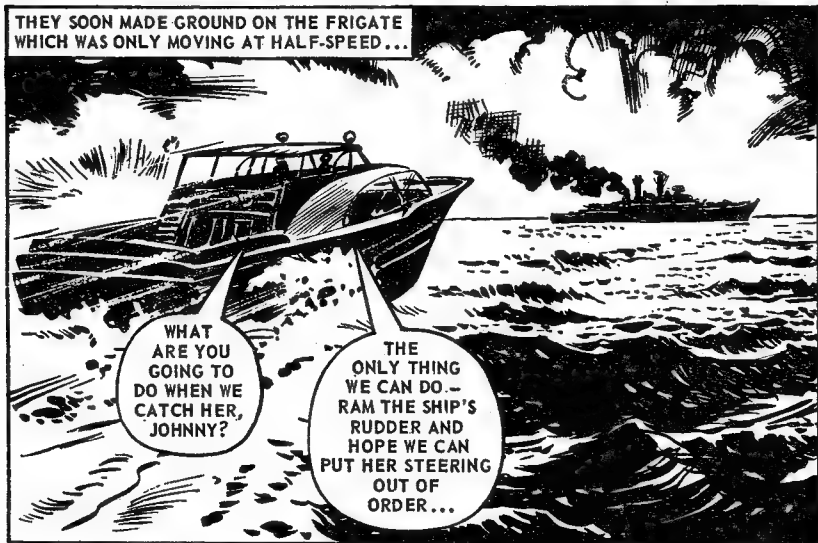


SECONDS LATER, JOHNNY WAS TAKING THE LAUNCH OUT ACROSS THE LAGOON.

WITH LUCK, WE MAY BE ABLE TO INTERCEPT HER BEFORE SHE REACHES THE REVIEW AREA...



THEY SOON MADE GROUND ON THE FRIGATE WHICH WAS ONLY MOVING AT HALF-SPEED...



IT'LL BE A LONG SWIM, CHUM!  
WE'LL HAVE TO DIVE OVERBOARD  
BEFORE THE CRASH COMES IF WE  
DON'T WANT TO BE KILLED!



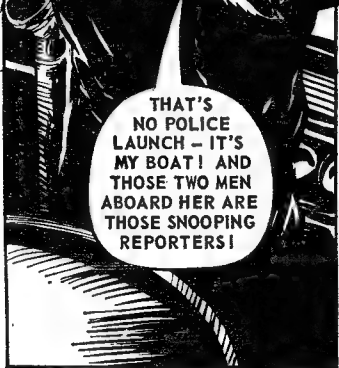
ABOARD THE FRIGATE, THE LOOKOUT  
MAN CALLED TO RYCOFF -



IS THAT  
POLICE LAUNCH  
CHASING-US,  
BOSS?



THAT'S  
NO POLICE  
LAUNCH - IT'S  
MY BOAT! AND  
THOSE TWO MEN  
ABOARD HER ARE  
THOSE SNOOPING  
REPORTERS!



THEY'RE  
GOING TO  
TRY TO CRASH  
US! THE  
RAVING  
LUNATICS!



JOHNNY AIMED THE LAUNCH  
SO THAT IT WOULD HIT THE  
RUDDER, AND GAVE THE  
ENGINE FULL THROTTLE...



THEY DIVED OVERBOARD -  
JUST AS RYCOFF FIRED...



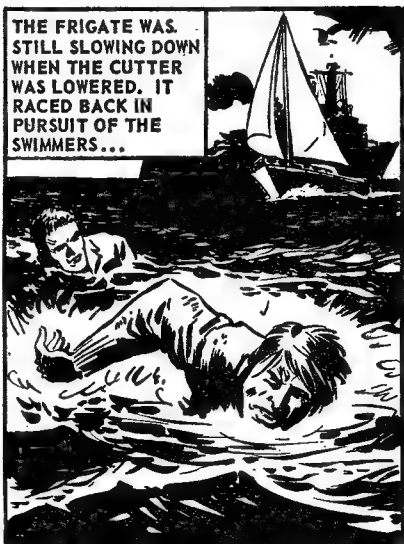
JOHNNY LOOKED BACK TO SEE WHAT  
HAPPENED — AND GROANED IN DISMAY.



FULL SPEED ASTERN! I WANT THOSE  
MEN PICKED UP! THEY MUSTN'T GET  
ASHORE!



THE FRIGATE WAS  
STILL SLOWING DOWN  
WHEN THE CUTTER  
WAS LOWERED. IT  
RACED BACK IN  
PURSUIT OF THE  
SWIMMERS...



THEY NEVER STOOD A CHANCE AND  
WERE SOON ROUGHLY HAULED ABOARD.



ONCE ON THE FRIGATE, JOHNNY AND TED WERE TAKEN DOWN TO THE  
OPERATIONS ROOM TO JOIN THE OTHER PRISONERS...



RYCOFF'S HELICOPTER ARRIVED ON SCHEDULE...

THE HELICOPTER HAS LOCKED ON TO OUR GUIDANCE SYSTEM, BOSS.

GOOD! WE CAN ABANDON SHIP NOW.

MINUTES LATER, RYCOFF AND HIS GANG WERE IN THEIR LAUNCH, HEADING TOWARDS THE SHORE. THE FRIGATE, UNDER REMOTE CONTROL FROM THE HELICOPTER, WAS BEING GUIDED TOWARDS THE WARSHIPS OF THE AMERICAN 6TH FLEET.

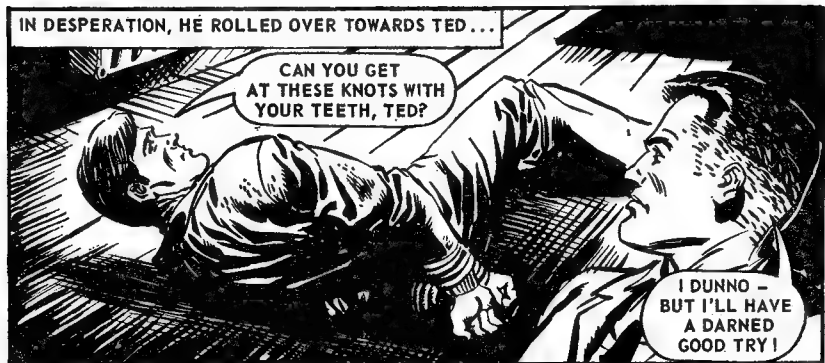
GET THAT THROTTLE WIDE OPEN. WE DON'T WANT TO BE AROUND WHEN THAT BOMB GOES UP!



ABOARD THE FRIGATE, JOHNNY, TOO, COULD SEE IN HIS MIND'S EYE WHAT WAS GOING TO HAPPEN...



IN DESPERATION, HE ROLLED OVER TOWARDS TED...





THE KNOT WAS TIED WICKEDLY TIGHT...



AT LAST, IT MOVED A FRACTION...



BY NOW, THE CAMPION WAS DRAWING CLOSE TO THE LINES OF AMERICAN SHIPS, GUIDED WITH UNCANNY ACCURACY BY THE HELICOPTER...



AT LAST JOHNNY'S HANDS WERE FREE. HE IMMEDIATELY WENT OVER TO THE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER...



ONCE FREE, THE COMMANDER RUSHED FOR THE BOMB. FOR A START, HE SMASHED BOTH ANTENNAE...



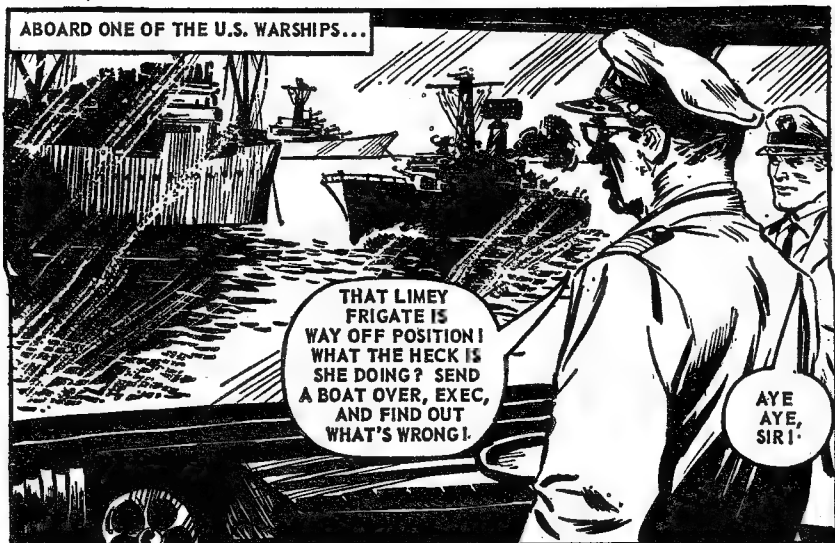
WITH THE SWEAT POURING DOWN HIS FACE, HE SET TO WORK. IT WAS NOT EASY, FOR THE NUCLEAR DEVICE WAS OF A TYPE UNKNOWN TO HIM. BUT AT LAST HE BREATHED A HEARTFELT SIGH OF RELIEF...



AT THAT MOMENT, THE FRIGATE WAS AMONG THE SHIPS OF THE AMERICAN FLEET. THE OPERATOR IN THE HELICOPTER THREW THE VITAL SWITCH...



ABOARD ONE OF THE U.S. WARSHIPS...



BEFORE VERY LONG, THE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER, JOHNNY AND TED WERE EXPLAINING WHAT HAD HAPPENED. THE AMERICAN'S RESPONSE WAS IMMEDIATE...



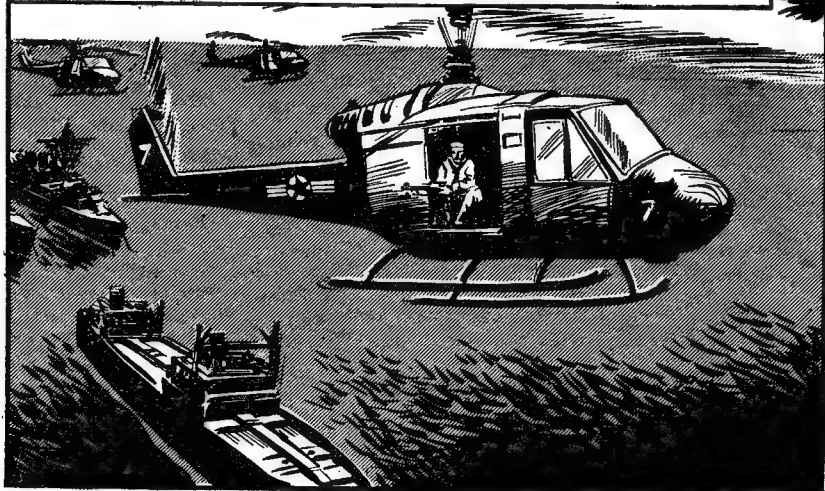
JOHNNY APPEALED TO THE CAPTAIN...

COULD WE GO ALONG IN ONE OF THE HELICOPTERS, SIR? AFTER ALL, WE ARE NEWSPAPERMEN - AND THIS IS QUITE A STORY!

WELL, YOU BOYS HAVE DONE A GRAND JOB, SO I GUESS I CAN BEND THE RULES A MITE. OKAY, YOU CAN GO!



TED BORROWED A CAMERA FROM ONE OF THE CREWMEN, AND HE AND JOHNNY WENT OFF IN THE THIRD HELICOPTER TO TAKE OFF...



MEANWHILE, RYCOFF AND HIS MEN HAD REACHED THE QUIET COVE WHICH WAS THEIR RENDEZVOUS. RYCOFF WAS RAGING MAD...



A CRY OF ALARM BROKE FROM ONE OF THE MEN...



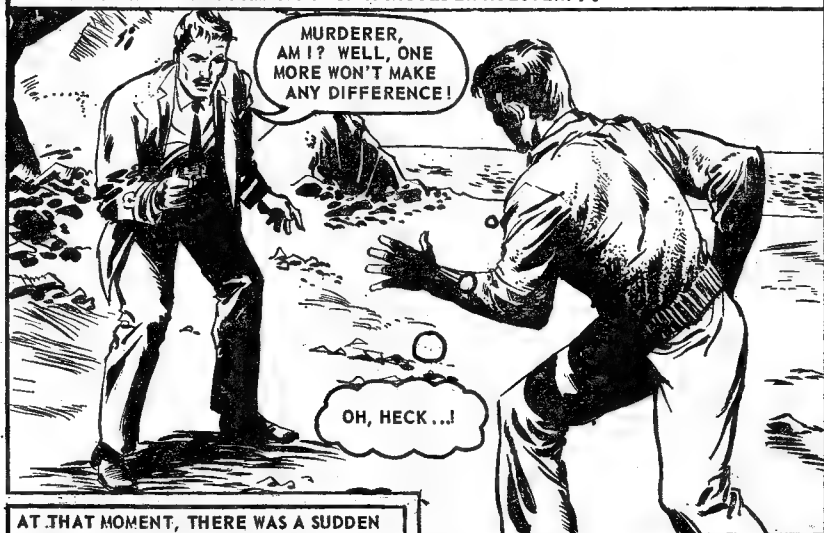
BUT WITHIN SECONDS, THE GUN CREWS ON THE HELICOPTERS PUT DOWN A CONE OF FIRE, PENNING RYCOFF'S GANG IN A CURTAIN OF FLYING LEAD...







IN HIS ANGER, JOHNNY COMPLETELY FORGOT THAT HE WAS UNARMED – UNTIL RYCOFF SUDDENLY DREW AN AUTOMATIC FROM A SHOULDER HOLSTER. . .



AT THAT MOMENT, THERE WAS A SUDDEN FLASH, AS TED LET OFF ONE OF HIS FLASH BULBS! FOR A BRIEF SECOND, RYCOFF WAS BLINDED...



AND THAT GAVE JOHNNY HIS CHANCE...

UGH!

NOT BAD - NOT BAD AT ALL!  
WE'LL RUN THESE PICS ON  
THE FRONT PAGE, AND  
HEADLINE YOUR STORY,  
JOHNNY. NOW YOU TWO CAN  
TAKE THE REST OF THE DAY  
OFF - BUT I'LL HAVE ANOTHER  
JOB FOR YOU TOMORROW, MIND!

TWENTY-FOUR HOURS  
LATER, BACK IN  
LONDON...

THANKS,  
BOSS -  
YOU'RE TOO  
GENEROUS!

# The Emperor's Treasure

IN 1866 THE AUSTRIAN ARCHDUKE MAXIMILIAN, THEN EMPEROR OF MEXICO, SENSED THE IMPENDING DISASTER HOVERING OVER HIS THRONE. FOR TWO YEARS HE HAD CLUNG PRECARIOUSLY TO HIS EMPIRE KNOWING FULL WELL THAT IT WAS ON THE BRINK OF FALLING INTO THE HANDS OF THE HOT-HEADED MEXICAN PATRIOTS.

I NEED YOUR HELP, MY MOST LOYAL AND DEVOTED FRIENDS. THERE IS NO-ONE ELSE IN THIS TREACHEROUS EMPIRE WHOM I CAN SAFELY TRUST.



I FEAR THE MEXICAN PATRIOTS WILL SOON BE STRONG ENOUGH TO DUST 'THE FOREIGNERS' - AS THEY SO SCORNFULLY REFER TO US. SO I AM SENDING THE EMPRESS CARLOTTA BACK TO EUROPE NOW BEFORE THE TROUBLE STARTS. AS I TOO, SHALL UNDOUBTEDLY HAVE TO FLEE FOR MY LIFE, I WANT YOU, MY FRIENDS, TO TAKE MY PERSONAL TREASURE OUT OF MEXICO AND INTO TEXAS WHERE IT WILL BE SAFE FROM THE GRASPING HANDS OF THESE REBELS.



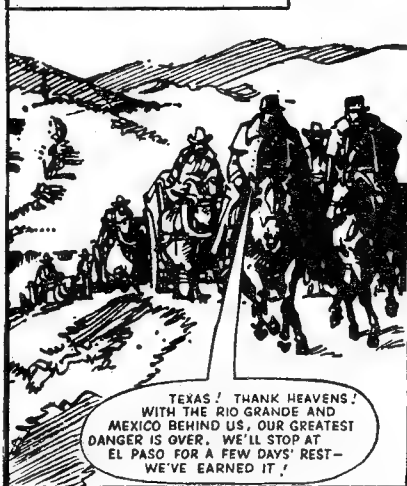
AFTER MUCH PLANNING IT WAS DECIDED THAT ALL THE EMPEROR'S JEWELS, GOLD AND SILVER BULLION, COINS, AND PLATE SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PACKED AND CONCEALED IN FLOUR BARRELS AND LOADED ON TO FIFTEEN OX CARTS.



AND SO IT WAS THAT MAXIMILIAN'S FABULOUS WEALTH PASSED INTO THE KEEPING OF HIS FOUR AUSTRIAN OFFICER-FRIENDS. BUT NEVER AGAIN WAS HE TO SEE HIS TREASURE. FOR LESS THAN A YEAR LATER FATE DECREED THAT MAXIMILIAN, EMPEROR OF MEXICO, SHOULD DIE AT THE HANDS OF A PATRIOT FIRING SQUAD. THE ABRUPT END OF HIS BRIEF THREE-YEAR REIGN HERALDED THE FALL OF THE MEXICAN EMPIRE.



SEVERAL DAYS OF FORCED MARCHING FOUND THE EMPEROR'S CARAVAN SAFELY ON TEXAS SOIL.



HAD THE AUSTRIAN OFFICERS THE SLIGHTEST INKLING OF THE DANGER THAT LAY AHEAD THEY WOULD HAVE HEADED BACK TO MEXICO CITY WITH ALL SPEED. BUT, OF COURSE, THEY WERE NOT TO KNOW. WHILE RESTING AT EL PASO THEY MET SIX EX-CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS FROM MISSOURI. AND FROM THAT MOMENT THE GRIM SHADOW OF DEATH BEGAN REACHING OUT TOWARDS THEM.

YES, SIR, WE'RE HEADED FOR MEXICO. THE CIVIL WAR'S TORN THIS COUNTRY APART, BUT THERE'S MONEY TO BE HAD OVER THE BORDER, AND THAT'S FOR US. WHERE YOU FOLKS BOUND FOR?

SAN ANTONIO.  
DO YOU KNOW IT?

KNOW IT? I'LL SAY! WE'VE JUST COME FROM THERE AND EVERY DURN MILE OF THE WAY WAS NIGH ON INFESTED WITH GOSH-BLAMED COMANCHES ON THE PROWL, AND BADMEN OF EVERY DESCRIPTION!

THAT'S DISCOURAGING NEWS FOR WE HAVE A VALUABLE LOAD OF FLOUR WHICH WE MUST DELIVER IN SAN ANTONIO AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

WOULD YOU MEN BE INTERESTED IN TAKING US TO SAN ANTONIO? WE COULD DO WITH A GUIDE AND A STRONG GUARD—AND YOU'RE WELL ARMED! IF WE MAKE IT SAFELY WE'LL PAY YOU WELL.

THE OFFER WAS SHAPPED UP BY THE EX-SOLDIERS WHO WERE ALL LOW IN FUNDS. BUT ONCE THE CARAVAN GOT UNDER WAY THEIR CURIOSITY BEGAN TO GET THE BETTER OF THEM.

SAV, PETE, WHAT'S SO 'PRECIOUS ABOUT FLOUR THAT IT SHOULD REQUIRE A MILITARY ESCORT ?

YEAH, I'VE BEEN WONDERING ABOUT THAT TOO, BILL. AND YOU NOTICE THE WAY THOSE FOUR GUYS GUARD THE CARTS AT NIGHT WHILE THE MEXIES SLEEP? I RECKON THERE'S SOMETHING IN THOSE BARRELS BESIDES FLOUR. WHAT SAY WE TAKE A LOOK ?

A COUPLE OF NIGHTS LATER WHEN CAMP WAS MADE AND EVERYONE WAS EATING . . .

HOLY COW ! GOLD ! SILVER ! AND JEWELS ! IF ALL THE BARRELS ARE LIKE THIS ONE WE'RE PLAYING NURSEMAIDS TO A KING-SIZE FORTUNE !

WE'LL TELL THE REST OF THE BOYS AND MAKE OUR PLANS. FOUR AUSTRIANS AND FIFTEEN MEXICAN PEONS WON'T BE ANY PROBLEM. WE'LL SOON FIX 'EM, EH, BILL ?

SURE, RECKON TOMORROW NIGHT WILL BE A GOOD TIME. WE'LL BE IN THE KING MOUNTAINS THEN AND CAN MAKE CAMP AT CASTLE GAP. THERE WON'T BE A SOUL TO DISTURB US !

AND SO STARK TRAGEDY BEFELL THE EMPEROR'S CARAVAN AT CASTLE GAP, A CANYON IN THE KING MOUNTAINS, FIFTEEN MILES EAST OF THE HORSE HEAD CROSSING OF THE PECOS RIVER. NINETEEN UNSUSPECTING MEN WERE FOULY MURDERED IN COLD BLOOD - TWO WERE ON GUARD, THE REST ASLEEP.

ALL THE TREASURE - EXCEPT FOR WHAT THE MEN COULD CRAM INTO THEIR SADDLE-BAGS - WAS BURIED IN A HASTILY DUG PIT IN THE CANYON FLOOR, AND THE BODIES OF THE NINETEEN MEN THROWN ON TOP.

THE TREASURE WILL BE SAFE HERE UNTIL WE DECIDE HOW TO GET RID OF IT. WE'LL BURN ALL THE BARRELS AND CARTS ON TOP OF THE PIT SO IT'LL LOOK LIKE A BURNED-OUT CAMPFIRE, AND NO-ONE WILL EVER BE ANY THE WISER.

CAN'T WAIT TO GET TO SAN ANTONIO AND SPEND SOME OF THAT GOLD. WE'LL HAVE OURSELVES A HIGH OLD TIME ALL RIGHT, EH, FELLERS?



THE OXEN AND HORSES WERE TURNED LOOSE AND BY DAWN THE SIX RUTHLESS KILLERS LEFT THE BURIAL SITE AND HEADED FOR SAN ANTONIO, THEIR SADDLE-BAGS BULGING WITH THE STOLEN LOOT.

SAN ANTONIO, HERE WE COME!

THE WORLD'S OUR OYSTER! WE'RE SITTING PRETTY FOR LIFE!



BUT OFTEN THE BEST LAID PLANS OF MEN BACKFIRE!  
ONE OF THE MISSOURIANS SUDDENLY FELL ILL ON THE  
WAY TO SAN ANTONIO . . .

MY STOMACH! I'VE GOT  
THE MOST GOSH-AWFUL  
PAINS! YOU .. FELLERS..  
.. GO .. ON. I'LL .. HAVE  
TO REST .. AWHILE  
I'LL .. CATCH ..  
YOU .. UP ..

SAY, HOW DO WE  
KNOW WHETHER OR NOT  
YOU'RE FAKING THAT PAIN?  
COULD BE YOU'VE IDEAS OF  
GOING BACK TO RECOVER  
THAT TREASURE FOR  
YOURSELF!

YEAH, THAT'S POSSIBLE!  
IF YOU CAN'T RIDE, HAL,  
RECKON WE'LL JEST HAVE TO SHOOT  
YOU. WE CAN'T RISK BEING DOUBLE-  
CROSSED. THAT FORTUNE BELONGS  
TO ALL OF US.

THE MAN WAS OBVIOUSLY  
IN TOO MUCH PAIN TO RIDE  
BUT HIS PLEAS TO LIVE FELL  
ON DEAF EARS.

LET'S GO!  
WE GOT MONEY TO  
BURN. WE'LL TEAR  
THE TOWN APART HAVING  
OURSELVES A  
TIME!

BUT THE MISSOURIAN DID  
NOT DIE. HOURS LATER, BADLY  
WOUNDED, HE MANAGED TO  
CLIMB INTO HIS SADDLE.

SOME MILES FARTHER ON  
HE SAW THEM - THE  
MUTILATED BODIES OF HIS  
FIVE COMPANIONS!

WAAL! IF THAT'S  
NOT RICH! COULDN'T WAIT  
TO SPEND THEIR DOUGH, AND  
THEN THEY GET THEMSELVES  
ROBBED AND KILLED BY INJUNS!  
THAT'LL LARN 'EM TO DOUBLE-  
CROSS ME. HE-HE-HE!



THE HYSTERICAL LAUGHTER DIED ON THE MAN'S LIPS AS HE SUDDENLY REALISED HE WAS THE SOLE OWNER OF THE VAST BURIED TREASURE.



'IT'S MINE - ALL MINE! ALL THAT WEALTH BELONGS TO ME, ALONE! MUST GET TO SAN ANTONIO - SEE A DOCTOR, GET THIS BULLET WOUND TAKEN CARE OF.'

IT WAS AS THOUGH A CURSE, HAD BEEN LAID UPON THE ROBBERS OF THE EMPEROR'S CARAVAN, FOR BY THE TIME THE SURVIVING MISSOURIAN FOUND A DOCTOR...



I'VE BAD NEWS FOR YOU, FRIEND. YOUR WOUND IS SO BAD THE INFECTION HAS SPREAD TO YOUR BLOODSTREAM. THERE'S NOTHING ANYONE CAN DO FOR YOU NOW. IT'S TOO LATE. AT THE MOST I'D SAY YOU HAVE THREE - FOUR DAYS LEFT. I'M SURE SORRY.

NO! NO! I CAN'T DIE! I MUSTN'T DIE! DOC, YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING! YOU'VE GOT TO SAVE ME! I'LL MAKE YOU RICH - ONLY - SAVE MY LIFE!

BUT THE MISSOURIAN WAS DOOMED. HIS BITTERNESS AT THE JOKE FATE HAD PLAYED ON HIM WAS INDESCRIBABLE. AND JUST BEFORE HE DIED ...

... THAT'S THE WHOLE STORY, DOC. I'VE DRAWN A ROUGH MAP OF THE TREASURE SITE. IT'S ALL YOURS. I'VE NO-ONE TO LEAVE IT TO, AND I'D LIKE YOU TO HAVE IT FOR LOOKING AFTER ME. HOPE YOU LIVE TO ENJOY ALL THE RICHES.



WHAT A FANTASTIC STORY! TWENTY-FIVE MEN WIPED OUT BECAUSE OF GOLD GREED! WHAT A TERRIBLE WASTE!

ON THE DEATH OF THE MISSOURIAN, THE DOCTOR RELATED HIS STORY TO A LAWYER. BECAUSE OF AN INDIAN UPRISING, IT WAS MONTHS BEFORE THEY COULD SAFELY VENTURE AS FAR AS CASTLE GAP. AND WHEN THEY DID . . .

HIS MIND MUST HAVE WANDERED, FOR NONE OF THE LANDMARKS ON THIS MAP TALLY WITH THOSE AROUND HERE! LOOKS LIKE WE'LL NEVER FIND THE TREASURE.

YES, THIS IS A FOOL'S ERRAND. I SUGGEST WE MAKE TRACKS HOME BEFORE WE RUN INTO ANY HOSTILE INDIANS.



ALTHOUGH ENDLESS SEARCHING WAS CARRIED OUT, MAXIMILIAN'S TREASURE WAS NEVER UNEARTHED, AND REMAINS ONE OF THE WORLD'S UNSOLVED MYSTERIES.

SUPPOSEDLY IT **STILL** LIES BURIED BENEATH THE NINETEEN SKELETONS SOMEWHERE NEAR CASTLE GAP IN THE KING MOUNTAINS, ONE OF THE GATEWAYS TO WESTERN TEXAS. **IT IS THERE FOR ANYONE TO FIND!**



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THE EDITOR

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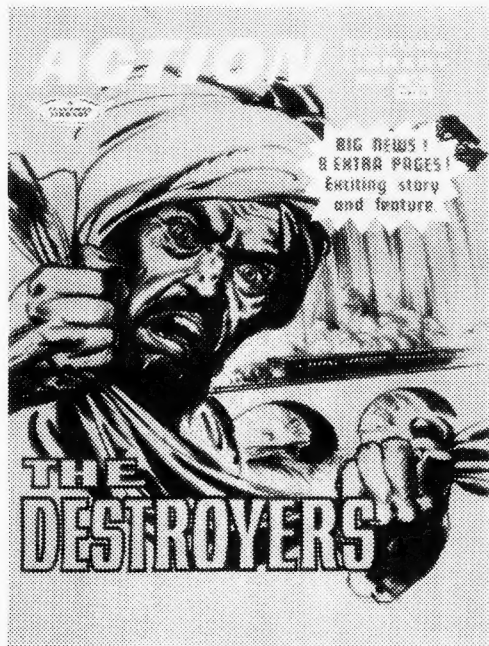
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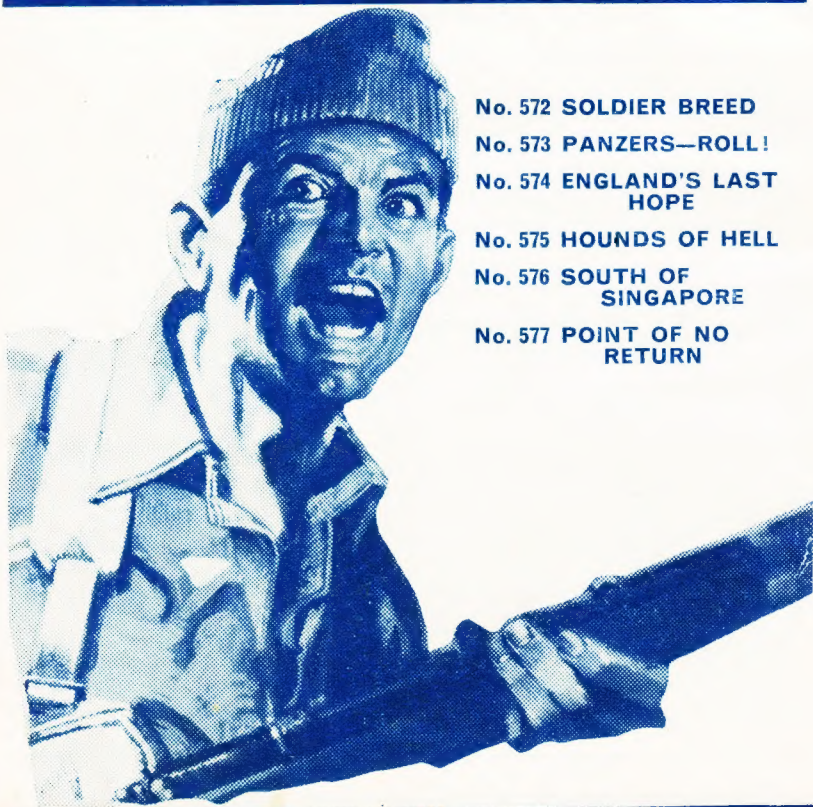
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